



International Journal of Innovative Knowledge Concepts

Use of Social Networking by the Library Professionals of University of Kashmir: A Study.

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Abstract: Social networking sites have become an important social and instant platform for computer-mediated communication. The varied social networking tools are increasingly used by individuals of all ages but are especially popular among young people and college students. Due to high use among these two groups, many academic librarians advocate using these new social Web platforms to reach out to student populations. The study was done to find awareness, service and use of social networking by library professionals. Therefore, 15-item questionnaire consisting of demographic information, usage, professionalism associated with Social network etc was prepared to gather the data. The study reveals that there is complete awareness about social networking among library professionals of Kashmir University. The study also reflects that Facebook has got the maximum membership in comparison to other SNS

Keywords: Social Networking, Library Professionals, Facebook, Academic institutions.

INTRODUCTION:

Social networking sites have become an important social platform for computer-mediated communication (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zuniga, 2010; Powell, 2009; Tapscott, 2008) and play a prominent role in young peoples' lives (Wang, Jackson, Zhang, & Su, 2012). A social network site is a web-based service that allows users to: (1) present a profile within an organized framework, (2) create a list of other persons with whom they share connections, and (3) navigate their list of connections and view those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In other words, a social network site provides the individual an opportunity to create his/her profile, and share texts, images, and photos (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Pfeil et al., 2009; Powell, 2009; Tapscott, 2008). Usually, individuals use social networks to strengthen offline relationships or support offline connections. These connections may be based on weak ties, but generally there is some common offline connection among participants (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Social networks enable communication by employing computers as collaborative tools to expand group formation, scope, and influence (Kane, Fichman, Gallagher, & Glaser, 2009; Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009; Ross et al., 2009). It appears that social networking sites provide internet users a venue for interpersonal communication with

friends, relatives, peers, co-workers, and strangers. Facebook includes numerous communication features such as: sending public and private messages, posting photos, blogging, instant messaging (IM), games, and even presenting a user's likes. People can search for other users by names or fields of interest and gather friends by 'friend requesting' (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). Social networking has accelerated dramatically over the last several years and as of February 2013, Facebook—the largest, most popular such network—had over one billion active users. Hence, the question arises as to what factors may influence information professionals' choices when adopting new technologies such as Facebook in their information centers. This question is crucial since information professionals should understand that many of their patrons use Facebook as a major channel of communication, and they too should be able to use it in order to reach and influence their clients. Further, information professionals should realize that they can use Facebook as a new and convenient avenue of communication with their colleagues (Aharony, 2012, 2013; Carlsson, 2012; Connel, 2009; Jacobson, 2011; Phillips, 2011; Scale, 2008), no one has focused so far on information professionals' attitudes towards it.

Over the past decade, the communication uses of the Internet have become a very important part of young people's lives (e.g., Gemmill & Peterson,

2006; Jones, 2002; Lenhart & Madden, 2007; Subrahmanyam & Green'eld, 2008). Social networking sites are the latest online communication tool that allows users to create a public or semi-public profile, create and view their own as well as other users' online social networks (**Boyd & Ellison, 2007a**), and interact with people in their networks.

The varied social networking tools are increasingly used by individuals of all ages but are especially popular among young people and college students. Due to high use among these two groups, many academic librarians advocate using these new social Web platforms to reach out to student populations (**Farkas, 2007a, b; Mathews, 2006, 2007; Milstein, 2009**). Online social networking by academic libraries is not, however, without controversy. While some maintain that social networking efforts are a successful and innovative method of student outreach, others argue that social networking by academic librarians is an ineffective use of librarian time and effort (**Sekyere, 2009**). A review of recent literature shows that social networking by academic librarians provides a potentially effective method of student outreach as long as librarians take into account the possible issues that may arise.

Discussions by academic librarians highlight several uses of Facebook for academic library outreach. One of the primary uses of Facebook by academic libraries is to market the library with a library fan page. Libraries advertise hours, location, and web site information. By linking to the library's web site, the Facebook page acts as a portal to the library (**Farkas, 2007a**). Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities (**Chu and Meulemans, 2008**). Essentially, Facebook pages provide a marketing tool for the services available to students at their academic library.

Additionally, academic libraries are experimenting with embedding library services within the Facebook page itself for a true outreach program. Using Facebook applications, some academic libraries embed the library catalog to allow students to access the contents of the library catalog without actually visiting the library's web site (**Farkas, 2007b**). Some academic libraries are also embedding the "ask-a-librarian" feature within the Facebook page to provide reference services through the social networking medium and to expand the chat and message function available through Facebook itself.

As online social network sites have exploded over the past few years, librarians have started to question and explore how this technology can be used in libraries. Most of the literature related to connecting to library users via social networks is anecdotal (**Connell, 2009**)

Social networking sites like Face book provides new venues for young LIS Professionals to express themselves and to interact with one another. It provides an unprecedented platform for them to dynamically form, collaborative groups and creates, publish, exchange, share and cooperate any type of information. It makes use of web sites and LIS Professionals are using SNS closely followed by creating awareness, socializing, making friends and new arrival display is predominantly dominated by SNS closely followed by topic discussion and metadata linking (**Subrahmanyam et al., 2008a**). Library professionals have always engaged with associations and communities to share experiences and information. (Breeding, Marshall 2009b). Librarians are also increasingly exploring the use of what have loosely been referred to as "Internet 2.0" companies and services, such as Facebook, to interact with and reach out to our users in new and creative ways. (**Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis, 2007**).

OBJECTIVES:

The study was completed with the following laid down objectives.

- 1) To find out the role of social networking sites (SNS), in creating awareness among LIS professionals of libraries of University of Kashmir.
- 2) To explore LIS professionals views about their use and services.
- 3) To identify potential contribution of SNS to fill the gaps among LIS professionals.

SCOPE: The scope of the study is limited to the library professionals of University of Kashmir.

METHODOLOGY

A 15-item questionnaire consisting of demographic information, usage, professionalism associated with Social network etc was prepared to gather the data. To ensure validity, five University Professionals were asked to review the questionnaire. The aim was to gauge if survey respondents would be able to understand the questions and instructions given in the research instruments. As a result, a few items were rephrased for a better clarity.

The study was based on survey. Hence, the numbers of questionnaires was to be limited and were distributed among various LIS Professionals of Kashmir University. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed among male and female professionals of University of Kashmir. Among them only 40 were received consisting of 28 males and 12 females. Among received ones 35 had responded while as 5 mentioned their names only and thus the study is based on only 35 respondents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Networking Sites provides libraries with an innovative and effective way of connecting with their users (O'Dell, 2010a). Librarians make use of SNS with the purpose of "being part of their communities" (as cited in De Rosa et al., 2007), or promoting libraries' services and events. There are libraries which use Twitter to connect themselves with important information sources (Chen, Chu & Xu, 2012 a).

According to Graham (2009), Facebook had facilitated the development of professional relationships in and beyond libraries. Despite the increasing adoption of SNSs by libraries, user engagement on libraries' SNS is low. Libraries' Twitter accounts only got a few followers and users' input is very low on libraries' Facebook fan pages (Jacobson, 2011).

Acquisti & Gross (2006) revealed that age and student status are most important factors in determining the face book membership, though the privacy concerns also play a crucial role, but only for non graduate students. Majority of the members are aware of the visibility of their profiles and they rely on ability to control the information they disseminate. However, they document the significant dichotomies between specific privacy concerns and information revelation behavior.

Ellison & Stienfield (2007) concluded that face book was used more to meet new people or to maintain and strengthen relationship with offline connection. This study disclosing the fact the offline world but may indeed be used to sport relationship and keep people in contact even when life changes move them away from each other. Very often social networking sites are used by the people keep in touch with the people known to us in real world and to make new contact in the virtual world.

Topper (2007) discussed about social networking in library. The study revealed that library will have to reach users in this preferred method of communication and they showed the way of planning a head for future.

Sheldon (2008) found that students who engage less than personal social interaction have fewer face book friends but log in to face book more. Further, Allen, Evanes & Hari, (2012) studied adolescent peer relationship and behavior problems predict young adults communication on social networking sites. The study was conducted to examine predictors of young adult communication on social networking websites face book and my space. Social and behavioral adjustment was assessed when they were aged 13-14 years and again at ages 20-22 years participant social networking websites used and indicators of friendship quality on their web pages were coded by their observers. The research review that the youth how had better adjusted at ages 13 years were more likely to be

using social networking WebPages at ages 20-22 years.

Keenan (2009) reveals that social websites are a number of deferent approaches to encourage sociability amongst their users. Facebook promotes popularly and representing both real world and virtual networks in a web environment. In the same manner, Braddy, Holcomb & Smith (2010) found that education based social networking site can be effectively used in distance education course. They are an excellent tool for improved online communication among students in higher distance education.

Kuppswamy and Narayan (2010) found that social networking websites have both positive as well as negative impact on the education of youth, depending on the ones interest to use it in a positive manner for his or her education. Moreover, Kalpidou, Costin & Morris (2011) studied relationship between facebook and wellbeing of undergraduate college students and came to the conclusion that the first year students had a stronger emotional connection and spend more time on facebook while they reported fewer friends than upper class students did. The group did not differ in the adjustment scores. The number of facebook friends potentially hinders academic adjustment and spending a lot of time on facebook is related to low self esteem. The number of facebook friends was negatively associated with emotional and academic adjustment among the upper class students. The research found that the relationships become positive latter in collage life when students use facebook effectively to connect socially with their peers.

Thompson et. al.(2008) said in this age of internet communication, the identity of being a 'professional' is expanding, inadvertently blurring the interface between work and personal time. Social networking websites such as Facebook are popular among young pre-professionals, and allow medical students and residents to communicate and share information with peers via personalized online profiles.

As per the study by Twenge (2013) youth who spend more time online are more likely to fight and carry weapons and are less likely to help others, although the direction of causation is unclear. Social media build shallow, "weak" ties, increase self-focus (including narcissism), and may lead to mental health issue for some individuals. Over the time social media became popular, young people's empathy for others, civic engagement, and political involvement declined.

SNSs are good at knowledge gathering that they have been utilized in research of social sciences to gather professional knowledge and the responses from research objects (as cited in Poynter, 2010). With millions of users, SNS offers opportunities for libraries to reach out to communities and gather

knowledge from the interaction between librarians and users (as cited in O'Dell, 2010b). Users can help create new library services by contributing their knowledge through online network (Chen, Chu & Xu, 2012 b).

According to Click, (2010) these free online and internet tools can be combined with library instructions to be used in information literacy training. Among the free online and internet tools that can be adapted by librarians, the authors focused on social media and Web 2.0 technologies which included the following social networks and websites: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, RSS, Wikis and Video sharing. Since the patrons of many libraries are no strangers for these free online and internet tools, this will help the librarians understand the library users and help these users

Data Analysis

1.0) Demographic Information:

1.1 Gender: Table 1, reveals majority of respondents participated in the survey were males (28) and females (12) were less no. In earlier, study done by Sahu (2013); Dong, Cheng and Wu (2014) also ascertain that males are in lead in comparison to females.

Table1. Gender

Total no. of respondents	Received		Not Received	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
50	28	12	3	7

1.2 Age: As far as age component is concerned a maximum no. of professionals were in age group of more than 35 followed by the professionals ranging from 25-35 years of age but less no. of young respondents were in age group of 20-25 as shown below in table 2

Table 2. Age

Age	20-25	25-35	More than 35
No.	3	16	21

1.0 Usage of Internet:

Frequent Internet users were those who were accessing internet more than 3 Hours a day (17) followed by those with one or two hours a day (13), 4 said once a week and single respondent responded with two to three days a week as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Usage of Internet:

Usage	No.
Once a week	4
Two to three days a week	1
one or two hours	13
More than 3 hours a day	17

become savvy consumers and creators of information. In addition, this will help facilitate the professional development of the librarians especially in geographically isolated developing countries.

Zimmer, Marzouq & Grover (2009) concluded that users with similar personal data like gender and race/ethnicity would share socio-economic status indicated by distinct network behaviors, and cultural preferences sharing common social relationship. These findings showed the great potential of the new social networking sites for research purposes. Other research that explored trust in the process of online information disclosure revealed an important role of information relevance, where it directly influences the risk beliefs and attitudes towards disclosing information

2.0) Social Networking Awareness and Joining:

All the respondents (35) are aware of SNS and all of them have joined SNS as shown in the

Table 4

Table 4. Social Networking Awareness and joining

	Responses	Percent
Yes	35	100
No	0	0
Total	35	100

3.0) SNS Logging Activity:

A large number of respondents (14) said we log SNS on daily basis followed by those who said two to three times, once, more than thrice 9, 9, and 3 respectively. Table 5

Table 5: SNS Logging Activity

SNS Logging	Responses
Daily	14
Two to three times a day	09
Once a day	09
More than thrice a day	03
Total	35

4.0) Social Networking Profiles: All the respondent (35) have Face book Profile while as LinkedIn and Youtube follow the list (Table 6)

Table. 6 SNS Profile	No. of respondents
Facebook	35
LinkedIn	15
Youtube	14
Blog	13
Twitter	12
Orkut	6
Instant Messaging	4

Discussion Forum	3
Fliker	2
Any other	2
Friendster	0
Xing	0
MySpace	0

5.0)Revelation of Identity on SNS: The data from the **Table .7** concludes that majority of professionals (85.71%) reveal their identity on the Social Networks while as 14.28% censors their identity.

Table 7. Revelation of Identity

	Responses	Percent
Yes	30	85.71
No	05	14.28
Total	35	100

6.0) Social Net Benefits: Here again every respondents were of the view that Social Networking sites are beneficial to us as shown below **Table 8**.

Table 8. Social Networking Benefits

	Responses	Percent
Yes	35	100
No	0	0
Total	35	100

7.0) SNS for Educational Purpose:

The results indicate that the majority of respondents (80%) use SNS for educational purpose while as rest (20%) don't use Social network for educational purpose (**Table.9**)

Table. 9 SNS for Educational Purpose

	Responses	Percent
Yes	28	80
No	07	20
Total	35	100

8.0) Trust on Information from SNS: This question was asked to respondent to check whether they trust information obtained via SNS. A good chunk of respondents said yes (30) while 5 said no (**Table. 10**)

Table.10 Information reliability

	Responses	Percent
Yes	30	85.71
No	5	14.28
Total	35	100

9.0) Purpose of using SNS:

The data presented in **Table.11** of the survey questionnaire provided information regarding purpose of SNS. Here the response were mixed . In addition, almost all respondents were of the view that it helps in promotion of library services and sharing experience.

Table. 11

S.no	Purpose	Respondents
A)	Find some information	31
B)	Get opinion from friends	21
C)	Entertain your self	8
D)	Socialize	19
E)	Professional activities	12
F)	Stay -to-date with friends life	22
G)	Promotion of Library Services	34
H)	Share your Experience	34
I	Any other	0

10.0) Ease of using Social Networking:

Table 12 suggests that it is easy to use Social Web while as less no. of respondents (3) said it is sometimes difficult as shown below in the scale ranging from very easy to difficult.

Table 12

Ease of Using	no.
Very Easy	09
Easy	17
Moderately Easy	06
Difficult	0
Very Difficult	0
Sometimes Difficult	3
Cannot say	0

11.0) Benefits of using Social Network: The results indicate that a good sum of professionals use SNS for sharing Knowledge, learning centred instruction tools and learning centred environment and participation as shown in the **Table 13**.

Table 13

S.No	Benefits of SNS	Respondents
A)	Supportive Innovative Teaching	5
B)	Peer Learning	5
C)	Creation of learning environment	2
D)	Enhance learning environment	14
E)	learning centred instruction tools	21
F)	learning participation	11
E)	sharing knowledge	21

12.0) SNS and Library Services:

All respondents 100% were satisfied with the fact SNS help in improvement of Library services and techniques to delivery of information as in **Table. 14.**

Table. 14 SNS and Library Services

	Responses	Percent
Yes	35	100
No	0	0
Total	35	100

15) Usage of SNS in future: Here the professionals were asked that are they ready to use SNS in future plan in their library. The responses generated were like this 52% said yes, 17% no and 31% concluded with cant say. (**Table. 15**).

Table. 15 Usage of SNS in future

Planning	Yes	No	Cant say
No. of respondents	18	06	11

Findings and Conclusion

The study reveals that there is complete awareness about social networking among library professionals of Kashmir University.

The study reflects that Facebook has got the maximum membership in comparison to other SNS. It is highlighted from the study that out of many SNS Facebook proved best in providing information to the user. The gender specific awareness about SNS revealed that male library professionals are more adaptable to use SNS like Facebook than female library professionals. It also reflects from the study that a large number of library professionals log SNS on daily basis.

Study also showed that SNS are beneficial to every library professional. It is highlighted from the study that majority of library professionals about (80%) use SNS for educational purpose and hence trust information obtained through SNS.

Further, it is clear from findings that library professionals use SNS to find information to keep themselves up to date and it is easy to use. The result indicates that a good sum of library professionals use SNS for sharing knowledge. As for as library service is concerned the study shows that all library professionals are satisfied with the fact SNS help in improvement of library services and techniques to delivery of information. In addition, majority of respondents said we will like to use SNS for their library in future.

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